

MENA Business Women Network's **2009 Corporate Ambassadors' Biographies**

Luz Araoz Hopewell

Director, International Trade, U.S. Small Business Administration

Luz Hopewell is the Director for the Office of International Trade in the Office of Capital Access at the U.S. Small Business Administration. Ms. Hopewell works to enhance the ability of small businesses to compete in the global marketplace. Her office oversees programs that facilitate access to capital, supporting international trade for eligible businesses through the SBA Export Express program, the Export Working Capital program and the International Trade Loan program. Additionally, her office ensures that the interests of small business are considered and reflected in the trade negotiations.

Before coming to the Office of International Trade, Ms. Hopewell worked in the Office of Business Development in the Office of Government Contracting and Business Development as the Associate Administrator and as the Deputy Associate Administrator for Financial Assistance in the Office of Capital Access.

Ms. Hopewell also served as the Associate Administrator for Government Contracting in the Office of Government Contracting and Business Development where she worked to create an environment for maximum participation by small, disadvantaged and woman-owned small businesses in Federal government contract awards.

Prior to joining SBA, Ms. Hopewell was the Director of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization for the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). She was responsible for the development and implementation of activities directed at ensuring small, minority and women-owned small business participation in DOT's direct procurement and Federal financial assistance procurement activities. Ms. Hopewell was responsible for DOT recording the highest percentage of prime contracts to small business than any other Cabinet-level agency in 1999. In addition, she earned the Vice President's prestigious "Hammer Award" for her role in assisting DOT in developing a unique procurement strategy for Information Technology Omnibus Procurement (ITOP).

Preceding her government service, Ms. Hopewell devoted twenty years to the Latin American Management Association (LAMA), a national small business trade association, which advocates on behalf of and operates programs to further minority business development. She began her career at LAMA as a Marketing Specialist and left as the President of the Association.

Ms. Hopewell has always been an advocate for small business and believes "When we all work together to assist the small and disadvantaged business community, there is a synergy that is very exciting!"

Linda J. Denny**President and CEO, Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC)**

Linda J. Denny is President and CEO of the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC), the leading advocate for the advancement of women-owned businesses as vendors and suppliers to multinational corporations and government agencies. WBENC is also the leading third-party certifier of women's business enterprises, providing the gold standard of certification that is being modeled increasingly internationally. agencies.

A nationally-recognized expert in the field of women's business development, Ms. Denny draws upon her depth of experience from the corporate, financial services, and entrepreneurial arenas to lead this multi-faceted organization into its next decade of successful growth.

In keeping with the strategic plan that Ms. Denny advanced, WBENC is instituting best practices in management, operations and connectivity with all its constituents including its Corporate Members, certified WBEs, 14 Regional Partner Organizations that implement certification across the country, and WBENC staff.

Under Ms. Denny's leadership, WBENC has increased the number of certifications by at least 20 percent per year. The WBENC Women in Business Conference and Business Fair continues to be successful, having attracted a record 3,005 attendees in 2008. In response to the economic environment, WBENC is creating dynamic programs throughout 2009 to raise the level of Quality in WBE businesses and position them to be more competitive in the global marketplace. And through WEConnect International's establishment of WEConnect United Kingdom and WEConnect Canada, WBENC's standard of certification is taking root globally.

When she assumed the Presidency two years ago, Ms. Denny initiated programs to drive corporate membership and revenue growth; enhance internal and external communications, and advance the vision for WBENC's global reach. Ms. Denny joined WBENC as vice president in 2003, and then served as interim president from October 2006 until June 2007. During this time, she managed every component of WBENC's operations, to include policymaking, fundraising, major national programs and events, communications, marketing, and corporate membership. She has been instrumental in advancing the vision for WBENC's global reach, including the launch of WEConnect UK, the first women's business enterprise certification program outside the US. WEConnect Canada launched in 2009.

Earlier, as national director of domestic growth markets for ING Insurance Company of America, formerly Aetna Financial Services, Ms. Denny demonstrated her talent for reaching decision makers among women's and diverse markets by targeting and delivering on their priorities. She spearheaded and implemented what was then an innovative marketing strategy to surface the critical issues that women and women business owners face around financial planning and employee retirement plans.

As corporate vice president at New York Life Insurance Company, Ms. Denny created and led the New York Life Women's Initiative, a nationwide program that boosted the hiring, productivity, and retention among women agents to help all agents more effectively sell to women. Prior to this role, as a compliance officer and supervising registered principal for NYLIFE Securities Inc., she was responsible for over 2,000 agents/registered representatives, 240 managers, and several hundred staff members working in 32 general offices in 13 states.

Ms. Denny's aptitude for sales was evident early on as an agent for New York Life Insurance Company, where she quickly qualified for the Million Dollar Round Table, became one of the leading sales managers in the company and by 1990 was the fifth woman ever to be appointed as a General Manager at New York Life.

Prior to that, Ms. Denny had first hand entrepreneurial experience as head of a manufacturing, home distribution, and wholesale distribution business, which she ran for five years.

Ms. Denny is an active member of distinguished organizations such as The Advisory Board of the IBM-World Bank, Small/Medium Business Growth Project; the Board of Visitors for the John H. Johnson School of Communications at Howard University; the Board of Directors of the National Women's History Museum; the W/MBE Diversity Committee for the Institute for Supply Management (ISM), the Office Depot Women's Advisory Board, and a Founding Board Member of the, Association of Women's Business Development Centers. She is also a member of the ASAE, Center for Association Management, and the MGM/Mirage Diversity Council. She has served as Treasurer of the Women's Leadership Board at the Kennedy School of Government; Harvard University

Ms. Denny is a frequent speaker and addressed women's retirement issues at the 2000 Republican National Convention. She received the 2002 Outstanding Alumnus Award, Pittsburg State University.

Geri Swift
Founding President, Women's Business Development Center

Geri Swift was the founding President of the Women's Business Development Center. WBDC, formed in 1995, fosters the development and retention of successful businesses by delivering resources that enable individuals to start new businesses and grow existing ones.

In 1999, under Swift's leadership, the Women's Business Development Center expanded its programs and created the Women's Business Enterprise Council PA-DE-sNJ (WBEC). WBEC, a marketing, procurement and certification assistance council, facilitates the relationship between corporations, government and women-owned businesses, certifies women-owned businesses and assists corporations in creating and building world class supplier diversity programs.

A WBENC co-founder and regional partner, the Women's Business Enterprise Council administers WBENC's National Certification Standard in Pennsylvania, Delaware and Southern New Jersey.

Working through her own business, the community, business organizations, and all levels of government and the corporate sector, Geri has played a leadership role in supporting the growth and development of entrepreneurial business ventures.

In 1985 she founded Geri Swift Associates, a professional services firm which provided management consulting and training services to help companies implement information systems, business advisory councils and supplier development programs.

Prior to starting her own professional services firm, Geri worked in management in the academic sector and Fortune 1000 manufacturing and financial services corporations in designing and implementing new departments, work-flow systems and procedures and training to accommodate the impact of technology on the workplace.

She received honors and was recognized as a Woman's Business Advocate from business and professional organizations. Geri was the founding president of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO), Greater Philadelphia Chapter. She also served as NAWBO's national vice president and as a director of the National Foundation of Women Business Owners, now called the Center for Women's Business Research.

Geri serves on the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) Board of Directors, the Leadership Council and the Development Committee. In 1997 Geri served on the Steering Committee that created the Women's Business Enterprise National Council and the National Association of Women Business Centers (AWBC). Geri received the WBENC 2006 WBOP Ambassador of the Year Award.

Locally, Geri is a member of the Governor Rendell's Minority and Women's Business Opportunity Council, the Women's Business Development Center's Board of Directors and the Women's Business Enterprise Council PA-DE-NJ.

V. Sue Molina
Retired Partner, Deloitte & Touche, LLP

With nearly 30 years in public accounting, Ms. Molina was a partner with Deloitte & Touche and Ernst & Young. She has a strong background in serving clients in the financial, tax, and real estate areas. Prior to retiring, she served as Deloitte & Touche's National Partner in Charge of the Initiative for the Retention and Advancement of Women where she was an advocate for diversity within a historically male-dominated industry. She led the firm's strong commitment to advance highly talented women through the development of innovative career planning, mentoring, and leadership training and succession programs.

Since retiring, she has continued to focus on advancing and mentoring women through her participation as the Chair of the Advisory Council of the Claremont McKenna College's Berger Institute for Work, Family and Children and as the Finance Chair and Board member of Vital Voices Global Partnership. A certified public accountant, she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration and a Master of Accountancy at the University of Arizona. She was recognized as one of the "Top 100 Most Influential People in the Accounting Profession" by Accounting Today. Mr. Molina currently serves on the board of directors of DTS, Inc, a public digital entertainment company, and Royal Neighbors of America, a 200,000 member fraternal insurance company, specializing in providing insurance to women.

Julie Bergman Sender**Executive Producer & Founder of The Cause Company and Balcony Films**

Julie Bergman Sender is an accomplished film producer, executive and media strategist. She began her career in 1982 as a film Executive at Warner Brothers. She then spent many years working as an executive and motion picture producer for director Sydney Pollack's Mirage Enterprises, then moving on to partner with Jodie Foster in the formation of Foster's Egg Pictures. She has produced a number of well known feature films including the Agnieszka Holland directed "Washington Square" starring Jennifer Jason Leigh, Albert Finney and Maggie Smith; the Ridley Scott film "G.I. Jane" starring Demi Moore, and "Six Days, Seven Nights" starring Harrison Ford.

Julie's work as a film producer and her leadership on campaigns organized around large-scale social issue campaigns and voter registration projects that combine cutting -edge new-media techniques with viral and conventional distribution methods have put her at the forefront of the business of creating cause media through her production company Balcony Films. Balcony Films specializes in taking an integrated, multi-platform approach to the production and distribution of media creating state-of-the-art strategies for social issue campaigns, film, television, radio and the web. Balcony Films works in both the for-profit and non-profit sectors to create media content to move progressive values and ideas. Julie owns and runs Balcony films in partnership with her husband, Stuart Sender, an award winning journalist and Academy Award nominated filmmaker. Their recent film, "The Garden," which they executive produced, had just received an Academy Award nomination for best documentary feature film. You can see some of the recent work by Balcony Films by going to the following website: www.balconyfilms.com